

Graeme Charles on Co-operation in The Devondaler



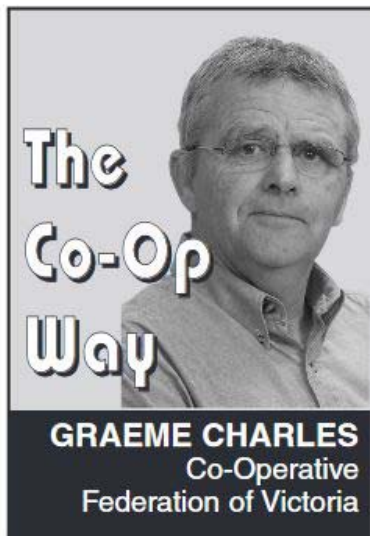
Graeme Charles was the Executive Officer and Secretary of the Co-operative Federation of Victoria Ltd between 1999 and 2002 and Deputy Chairman between 2002 and 2008 – the peak body for co-operatives in the Australian State of Victoria.

Between 2006 and 2008 Graeme Charles was a guest columnist for The Devondaler – the monthly newspaper of Murray Goulburn Co-operative Co. Limited. The Devondaler was established in 1986.

The Co-operative is one of Australia's largest with 2200 dairy farmer members and more than 2000 employees.

Twenty of these columns have been reproduced.

Co-operatives get together in New Zealand to discuss the Co-operative Advantage of Doing Business



Senior executives from co-operatives across Asia and the Pacific rim joined New Zealand co-operative executives in Wellington during November for a symposium on “The Co-operative Advantage of Doing Business”.

Organized by the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA), sponsored by the Indian Farmers Fertiliser Co-operative and hosted by the New Zealand Co-operatives Association, the object of the symposium was to share the business experience of successful co-operatives so as to enhance the competitiveness of co-operative enterprises in a globalised market.

“There is a huge amount of evidence to show and prove the ways in which co-operatives distinguish themselves from other business models, particularly investor-owned corporations,” said Mr. Shil Kwan Lee, the ICA's Regional Director. “With the growth of globalisation and the emergence of new markets, co-operative enterprises need to show clearly the values that provide their unique advantage.”

“With co-operatives being responsible for 22% of New Zealand's GDP and six co-operatives in the Global 300 list of the world's largest co-operatives,” Mr. Lee went on, “we know that dialogue between co-operative executives from around Asia and the Pacific will be very worthwhile, and expect to see a boost in trade between New Zealand and visiting co-operatives following the symposium.”

Speakers at the symposium included, David Graham, Chairman of Ballance Agri-Nutrients Ltd., Surinder Kumar Jhakar, Chairman of the Indian Farmers Fertiliser Co-operative Ltd., In-Suk Suh, Vice President Executive of the National Agricultural Co-operative Federation of the Republic of Korea, and senior executives from Kuwait's Union of Consumer Co-operative Societies, NTUC Fair Price, a co-operative that is Singapore's leading supermarket group, and Chris Cooper, Director of Learning and Development the Co-operative College UK.

I am not aware of any Australian presence at the symposium. The New Zealand Association of Co-operatives is a member of the International Co-operative Alliance. The only Australian member of the ICA is Capricorn Society Ltd. No State or Federal co-operative peak body enjoys ICA membership, although there is a move, led by Capricorn, to get some of our larger co-operatives such as MG to make a contribution that would enable the Co-operative Council of Australia to take up membership.

21 November 2007



List of Graeme Charles articles published between 2006 - 2008

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The importance of co-operatives in agriculture across the world.	2 October 2006	2
What Gives Co-operatives A Bad Name	21 November 2006	3
Murray Goulburn one of only two Australian co-operatives in the ICA Global 300	No date	4
UK Co-operative College and Co-operative Federation of Victoria helping Murray Goulburn members co-operative identity	!! December 2006	6
Review of The Democracy Principle: Farmer Co-operatives in Twentieth Century Australia by David Griffiths	12 February 2007	7
Particular Challenges for Co-operatives – Funding Expansion	12 February 2007	8
Particular Challenges for Co-operatives Part 2 Effective Democracy, or to put it another way, Members In Control	12 February 2007	9
Why are we ignoring co-operative solutions?	10 March 2007	10
A Co-operative AWB	29 March 2007	11
Could health co-operatives help solve the shortage of doctors in rural areas?	1 May 2007	12
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